

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 BONN 08624 201121Z

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----201124Z 100628 /14
O O 201110Z MAY 77 ZFF 4
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 8395
INFO USMISSION USBERLIN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BERLIN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USMISSION NATO

S E C R E T BONN 08624

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR PGOB WB GE GW US UK UR FR
SUBJECT: PRESS HANDLING OF SOVIET APPROACH
ON ALLIED FLAG TOURS

REFS: (A) STATE 115381; (B) BERLIN 6038; (C) BONN 8610;
(D) USBER 1338

1. A POLITICAL JOURNALIST HERE HAS TOLD US THAT UPON
RETURNING FROM TRIP TO BERLIN ON MAY 18, CHANCELLOR
SCHMIDT WAS ASKED BY SEVERAL JOURNALISTS WHY HE HAD MADE
THE COMMENTS HE DID ON THE WALL AND THE QA. HE
REPORTEDLY TOLD THEM "OFF THE RECORD" THAT THEY HAD TO
UNDERSTAND THAT THE SOVIETS HAD MADE RECENT DEMARCHE
TO THE ALLIES ASKING THAT THE PATROLS BE STOPPED.

2. SCHMIDT'S PERFORMANCE WILL PROBABLY PRODUCE PRESS
COVERAGE. THE JOURNALIST TOLD US THAT THOSE AT THE
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MEETING ARE NOW SCOURING FOR FURTHER LEADS THOUGH
BOUND BY "OFF THE RECORD" RULES NOT TO REPORT SCHMIDT'S
REMARKS THEMSELVES. HE THOUGHT THE STORY WOULD COME OUT
THIS WEEKEND.

3. SCHMIDT PRESUMABLY FELT UNDER PRESSURE BY
JOURNALISTS' QUESTIONS, ESPECIALLY IN VIEW OF HONECKER'S

ATTACKS ON SCHMIDT'S COMMENTS (REF B), AND HAD TO JUSTIFY HIS MONDAY REMARKS. HOWEVER, HIS BRIEFING IS DOUBLY UNFORTUNATE BOTH BECAUSE OF THE REACTION IT COULD EVOKE FROM THE ALLIES (FOR THIS REASON, WE DO NOT INTEND TO INFORM OUR BONN GROUP COLLEAGUES THAT SCHMIDT CAUSED THE LEAK) AND BECAUSE PUBLIC DISCLOSURE OF THE SOVIET DEMARCHE WILL EXACERBATE FRG/GDR RELATIONS AT A CRUCIAL TIME.

4. AT BONN GROUP MEETING TODAY, WE WILL URGE THE PROMPT DRAFTING OF CONTINGENCY PRESS GUIDANCE ALONG THE LINES OF REF (A). WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT WE CAN OBTAIN AGREEMENT TO STATEMENT THAT THE US, UK AND FRANCE CONTINUE TO EXERCISE THEIR RIGHT OF FREE CIRCULATION THROUGHOUT ALL SECTORS OF BERLIN. WE ARE NOT CONFIDENT THAT WE CAN GET AGREEMENT ON A STATEMENT THAT THIS RIGHT HAS NOT BEEN CALLED INTO QUESTION. WE WILL ALSO SEEK AD REF AGREEMENT THAT: (A) IT IS BEST FOR NO OFFICIAL PUBLIC STATEMENTS CONFIRMING DEMARCHE TO BE MADE; (B) IF ANY ARE TO BE MADE BY ONE OF THE BONN GROUP COUNTRIES, THE OTHERS WOULD BE INFORMED IN ADVANCE; AND (C) NATO CAPITALS WOULD BE BRIEFED BEFORE SUCH OFFICIAL PUBLIC STATEMENTS ARE MADE. WE WILL ALSO START WORK ON NATO BRIEFING, THOUGH WE WOULD DOUBT THAT WE COULD GET TEXT AGREED AT CAPITALS BEFORE NEXT WEEK.

5. WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT, EVEN IF THE DEMARCHE ON THE PATROLS BECOME PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE, THE ALLIES
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SHOULD REFRAIN FROM MAKING PUBLIC STATEMENTS CONFIRMING THE DEMARCHE IN THE INTEREST OF NOT EXACERBATING ALLIED/SOVIET RELATIONS ON THE MATTER. IT SEEMS TO US THAT THE SOVIETS WILL NOT BE UNDER AS GREAT A PRESSURE TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THE PATROLS IF THE ALLIES REMAIN SILENT, EVEN THOUGH SCHMIDT MAY BE THE CAUSE OF THE DEMARCHE BEING MADE PUBLIC.
STOESSEL

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Message Attributes

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Sent Date: 20-May-1977 12:00:00 am
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Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
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Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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Disposition Reason:
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ISecure: 1
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